

**DEPARTMENT OF THE AIR FORCE**

HEADQUARTERS AIR FORCE SPACE COMMAND

OCT 25 2000

MEMORANDUM FOR HQ AFSPC DIRECTORS
WING COMMANDERS
COMMAND CHIEF MASTER SERGEANTS

FROM: AFSPC/CC
150 Vandenberg St Ste 1105
Peterson AFB CO 80914-4020

SUBJECT: Air Force Space Command Stripes for Exceptional Performers (STEP)
Policy – FY01

1. Air Force Space Command receives a "fair share" of stripes to be given as STEP promotions for outstanding performance and the potential to perform in the next higher grade. The STEP program is a whole person, total career evaluation and should be used only when an individual's duty performance clearly warrants immediate promotion. The objective is to promote our absolute top performers.
2. There is concern that in the past we used STEP as an enlisted Below the Zone (BTZ) Promotion program. Approximately two-thirds of past STEP promotees were promoted ahead of their peers in terms of years of service and time in grade. On the other hand, awarding STEP promotions solely to extend a member's high year of tenure (HYT) or because an individual (that is not a top performer) has not been promoted under the Weighted Airman Promotion System (WAPS), also detracts from the intended program. We must continue to ensure we do not routinely use STEP as a BTZ tool, a HYT extension or a WAPS substitute for less than top performers.
3. When evaluating and determining STEP nominees, please review the following guidance:
 - a. Senior airmen and staff sergeants must have completed Airman Leadership School.
 - b. Technical sergeants to master sergeants must have completed NCO Academy in-residence.
 - c. Technical sergeants to master sergeants must have 2 years retainability from the effective date of promotion.
 - d. Airmen who are ineligible for promotion for conditions contained in AFI 36-2502, Table 1.1 (except Rule 1), are not eligible for consideration for promotion under STEP.

e. Strongly consider the average WAPS, time-in-service (TIS) and time-in-grade (TIG) when evaluating STEP selections. The Air Force averages (to the closest half year) for your consideration for promotion under WAPS are:

TIS to SSgt, TSgt and MSgt are 5.5, 14 and 16.5 years, respectively
TIG to SSgt, TSgt and MSgt are 3, 6.5 and 4 years, respectively

f. Surprise is a major part of this program. Nominees should not know they are being considered for a STEP promotion.

g. A total quality force review of the nominee's entire record is necessary; any UCMJ violations will render nominee ineligible for STEP promotion.

h. One STEP promotion per career is generally the rule.

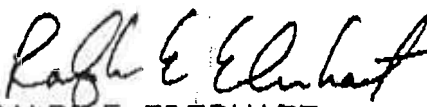
i. Base selections on recommendations from subordinate commanders or personal knowledge of the individual. Avoid using time-consuming administrative boards.

j. Remember that STEP is a promotion program not to be confused with our awards and decorations programs. Isolated acts of heroism or specific achievements should not be the sole basis for promotion under this program.

4. For the STEP quotas reserved for the CINC, nomination packages will be due to AFSPC/CCC annually no later than 15 December. Each Directorate and each Wing may nominate one individual for STEP consideration. All nominations can be from either category, Junior NCO or Master Sergeant, unless otherwise specified.

5. Packages should consist of: Commander's or Director's recommendation/transmittal letter, STEP nominations on an AF Form 1206 (one side only), personal data RIP and the individual's last five EPRs.

6. Please ensure all units receive this information as soon as possible. An additional message will be sent to all Wings and Directorates with your actual quotas when they are received from Air Force. We anticipate reduced quotas from last year as our command's eligibles have slightly declined. For any further questions, contact CMSgt Kevin Estrem, DSN 692-3120.


RALPH E. EBERHART
General, USAF
Commander